/48 cont'd/

585 [533] designated. The two singers sang alternately. When they finished singing, the go-betweens returned to the small house /to join the bridegroom/. Then a humorous act was put on in the small house. It was called t'ao ch'ien-liang ("to collect land tax"). The act began with two persons representing the bride's family coming there to demand tobacco leaves. During this act, there was a very humorous and interesting dialogue. Prior to leaving the house, the two "tax collectors" sang a song outside the door.

After the humorous act was over, one of the go-betweens then carried the bridegroom on his back toward the bride's house. The order of the procession was the same as before. /49/ The bridegroom's party walked to the bride's house and stopped in front of the door of the side room where they were greeted by an usher from [533] the bride's family. He greeted the bridegroom with a song. One of the go-betweens sang a song in reply. Between the bridegroom and the usher, there was a winnow in which were placed a wine pot and a wine cup. The usher then offered the wine to all the groom's party except the bridegroom. At this time, the young girls of the village again started making fun of the bridegroom, who stood still like a dummy. After singing and drinking, the go-betweens led the bridegroom to the central room of the bride's house. The interior decoration of this room was as follows: On the left side of the front door there was a censer and on the right side there were a pair of scissors and a sickle. In the center of the room, there was a big betel-nut shell with charcoal burning in it. Beside the betel-nut shell, there was a table on which a bottle of wine, two wine cups, two bowls of rice, and a bowl of cooked pork liver were set. When the bridegroom arrived at the door he stopped.

A man from the bride's family stood inside the door, holding the scissors and the sickle in his hand. Facing the bridegroom, he began to perform a ritual and to recite incantations. (It was said [783] that this ceremony was to drive away the devils /from the body of the bridegroom/.) After that the bridegroom was invited into the room. Stepping over the charcoal, he passed in and was seated at the table. The two go-betweens and the umbrella carrier were

/129 cont./

*782 Although the routine sacrifice is not held for any particular reason, its object is nevertheless the avoidance of calamities and the seeking of blessings. The "Sacrifice to the Ancestors" and "Eating Pigs" of the Miao religion and the "Local Divinity [177] of the Soil" and the "Flying Mountain" ceremonies of the guest religion are all for the purpose of beseeching the kuei not to make trouble and seeking their protection. The special sacrifices for the avoidance of calamities may be divided into [755] four categories: (1) for seeking a cure upon suffering illness; [783] (2) for seeking cleansing after seeing a supernatural phenomenon [777] or after any unlucky matter; (3) for seeking the resolution of a conflict that has arisen; (4) for seeking pardon for sins after [783] death. Those sacrifices for the invocation of blessings may be [556] divided into two categories: (1) to ask for wealth; (2) to ask [842] for children. But there are many ceremonies which on one hand are to avoid calamities, and /130/ at the same time are also ones which seek blessings. "Bludgeoning the Ox" of the [755] Miao religion can be performed both for the cure of sickness and can also be performed to ask for children. "Redeeming a [842] Vow to the No" of the guest religion may be performed for the [177] cure of illness or to ask for wealth or children, or can be performed for all of these .

Among the 16 ceremonies of sacrifice to the kuei of the Miao religion that we were able to investigate, the "Sacrifice" to the "Ancestors" and "Eating Pigs" are routine sacrifices; [755] "Ta Chia Hsien," "Redeeming the Soul," "Sacrifice to the Kuei of Pimples," and "Bludgeoning the Ox" are for seeking cures for sickness; the "Ta Kan Lo," "Sending Away the Supernatural Forces of the Old Tree," "washing the cat," and "washing the house" are for seeking cleansing after seeing a strange [783] phenomenon or something unlucky; "Eating Blood" is for seek- [777] ing resolution of a conflict that has arisen; and "Releasing the Soul of the Dead from Suffering" is for asking forgiveness of a dead person's sins. All the above, except for "Bludgeoning [842] the Ox," which asks for a son at the same time, are ceremonies performed for the avoidance of calamities.

/141 cont./

*782 incense and paper are burned. They watch the stance of the animal to divine good and bad luck. If the water buffalo, on [787 entering the house, lifts his feet to advance, with its head facing [777 the incense censer, and glances at the ancestral shrine, then it portends good luck. If the water buffalo is stubborn and refuses to move forward or even tries to back out as if frightened, then it portends bad luck. After the water buffalo has been bought, a Miao sorcerer is asked to come to the house to present the ox to the kuei, and also to beseech the kuei. After this presentation, the family has to wait for the first frost after the autumn harvest to make the sacrifice. When the date is decided it is never changed or postponed.

*782 After the autumn harvest has been completed and the first frost has arrived, an auspicious day is chosen to sacrifice to the 602 kuei. Half a month before, four paternal male cousins are asked [203 to go separately to where the relatives live to notify them. The most important relatives are the families of the host's mother's brother and the wife's maternal uncle, who are said to be the "leg-bearing relatives." They are so-called because after sacrificing to the kuei, one leg of the buffalo is given to the maternal uncle's relatives. A buffalo is divided into four legs. The first belongs to the /host's/ mother's brother, the second to the wife's maternal uncle, and the third and fourth are sent to other close relatives. The "leg-bearing relatives on receiving the notifica- [203 tion presents the messenger with a strip of red cloth as an expression of gratitude. Moreover, within the 12 days before the sacri- *782 fice, one must avoid seeing unclean things, such as a dead cat, [783 a dead dog, or a dead person. If this avoidance is violated, then [784 the person may not be in the company of the buffalo kuei. The "leg-bearing" relatives often go together with the clan brothers /of the host/, making up a number of at least ten or more men up to as many as 60 or 70. Also invited are musicians, trumpeteers /?/, and drummers, to go in formation. Wealthy families imitate [556 the old customs of the former Manchu dynasty, displaying official [177 insignia, playing fine music, and beating gongs and carrying parasols. The maternal uncle's family entitled to the first leg

/148 cont./

*782 The Miao sorcerer performs the ritual of repenting three times with the knife. He further repeats the performance with a pair of scissors, and again recites:

[783] "The scissors of the host's family are used to do repenting for the host's sins. After he has repented, he can then receive blessings. These scissors cut only misfortunes but not blessings. They cut the mourning cloth of the host, cut the cord that ties up his feet, cut the rope that wraps around his hands, and cut his coffin. When the host steps over the scissors, he will then have peace and will get blessings. [p'iŋ ɕiɑ⁴]. The large scissors split open a bright main road; the small scissors split open a bright path."

After the performance with the scissors, he uses a comb to repeat the ritual of repenting, combing over to the left and once to the right, and continuing the incantation:

[783] "This sun comb and moon comb belong to the shrine of the local divinity of the soil. With it I come to get rid of the sins of the host. This comb does not comb away the host's meritorious acts but his transgressions. He constantly made vows before the shrine of the local divinity of the soil /149/ and also drank blood before the shrine, with blood left on his mouth and sweating blood in his viscera. The host, after this combing with the sun comb and moon comb, will be at peace! [p'iŋ ɕiɑ⁴]. The large comb will comb open a bright main road; the small comb will comb open up a bright path."

*782 After the sorcerer has finished with the knife, scissors,
787 and comb, he takes hold of the chiao-tzu and begins divining for the host and members of his family, uttering at the same time the following incantation:

"The three rites of repenting having been completed, the sorcerer-priest now requests that he may question the kan lo kuei. I request that I may question the patron saint, the questions will be clear. I wish to ask the fortunes of the host's family, big and small, men

/150 cont./

*782 824 bowls each of wine and meat and a bowl of beeswax. The Miao sorcerer sits in front of the table, beating a bamboo tube with his right hand and uttering the incantation to send away the old trees' supernatural forces. The general purport of the incantation /151/ is to request the kuei to go away quickly after partaking of the wine and meat, for the children in the village after hearing the strange noise are terrified. Among the phrases of the incantation is "kill a goat to sacrifice to the kuei." This shows that previously the goat was also used as an object of sacrifice but now it is spared; the text of the incantation, however, has remained unchanged. After one section has been [788] recited, he stops beating the bamboo tube. He starts ringing the bell with his left hand and continues the incantation. At the [787] same time he performs divination with the chiao-tzu. If the sheng chiao or the yin chiao appears, the supernatural forces are considered to have departed. If he gets the yang chiao, they have not gone, and the incantation and the divination have to be repeated until either the sheng chiao or the yin chiao appears, when the kuei may be sent away by burning the paper money.

(9) Cleansing the House

*782 ●783 If one's house has been lived in by a family of a different surname, the master of the house must ask a Miao sorcerer to cleanse the house after that family moves out, otherwise, the owner after living there would not be prosperous. Cleansing the [776] house in Miao is called [ndzə˨ pəɤ˥]. The two kuei invoked are [dei˧ ʔɔɤ˥ nɔŋ˨ de˨] and [dei˧ lɑ˥ nɔŋ˨ qa˨]. The time is any time during broad daylight, and the place may be anywhere inside the house, either in the main room or in the side room, facing outside the door. A table is set up, and on it placed five bowls of wine, five pieces of pork, five piles of mi-pa, and five pieces of tofu/bean curd/. A piece of green cloth 6 ch'ih long is spread out on the ground under the table. On the cloth are one or two strings of copper yuan; they also use a cock, whose two wings are tied to a leg of the table. They do not use beeswax, but only use three slender sticks of incense stuck up in the mi-pa. The

/151 cont./

*782 ●783 sorcer-priest holds the chiao and rings the bell, standing in front of the table, and the words of the incantation he utters are to the following effect:

[769] "Now we have prepared well wine, meat, a cock, pa-pa, tofu, green cloth, clean water, and ready money to cleanse the house. First we invoke the ancestors of the host. When you hear my call, please hurry down and receive the objects of sacrifice. Next we invoke the ancestors of the previous tenant. The host, fearing that he may not be at peace here, has asked me to come to cleanse the house. I have come with many soldiers and horses. With water I cleanse the house, first cleanse the fire bed, next the fire pit. I cleanse the right and the left of the house; I cleanse the front and the back doors. After I have cleansed three times, the host may live in it with great prosperity, resources abundant, prosperous harvests of the five grains, and the increase of the six kinds of domestic animals. The trouble-making kuei have now been sent out the door, hereafter peace will be everlasting."

[787] After the incantation has been completed, he then divines with the chiao. If either the yang chiao or the sheng chiao appears, it is auspicious, and paper is burned to send off the kuei. But if the yin chiao appears, then the incantation has to be said again, until he divines and gets either the yang chiao or the sheng chiao, when it is the end. After the sorcerer-priest has completed his performance, he drinks the wine on the table and takes the cock, meat, pa-pa, tofu, green cloth, and copper yuan offered in sacrifice to the kuei, home with him.

[152/ (10) Cleansing the Cat

[825] The Miao consider that a cat dying in the house is an ill omen, and it is then necessary to ask a sorcerer-priest to purify the house in order to expel harmful emanations. In Miao this is called

/152 cont./

[t'ai mo-mo]. The kuei sacrificed to are [kuei mang jeng xiang] and [kuei mang jeng qiang]. The time is in broad daylight and the place is anywhere in the main house; it is only necessary to face out the door. A table is used on which are placed five bowls each of wine and meat, placed in two rows. The beeswax is not used. The sorcerer-priest holds the chiao in his right hand and utters words of an incantation, which say in general:

> "The reason for sacrificing to the kuei is because a cat died in the house. Since the cat died in the house, the host dares not sit down in this house to eat food for fear that he may get sick after eating; he dares not live in this house for fear that he will not prosper. Therefore, I request the kuei to come to drive the dead cat away."

After the incantation he divines with the chiao. The yin chiao or the sheng chiao indicates that the kuei of the cat has already gone; if he gets the yang chiao, then the kuei still remains in house. Then the incantation has to be started all over again until the divination shows that the cat kuei is gone, whereupon the paper money may be burned to send off the kuei.

(11) Drinking Blood

When two Miao become involved in a dispute about some matter or wrangle about property, and who is right and who is wrong is not clear, or if a man meets a false accusation in which he cannot clear himself, then they resort to drinking blood and taking an oath, which in the Miao language is called [ji t'ai ni'eng]. For minor matters it is done at the village shrine for the local divinity of the soil but for important matters it is necessary to go to the T'ien Wang ["Heavenly King temple"](1)

1. See "Sacrifice to T'ien Wang."

/178 cont./

*782 place in the spring, when it is colloquially called a "peach blossom vow," but this is rare. /Illus. 75 appears between pp. 178-79./

/179/ To carry out the fulfilling of a vow to the No, it is necessary to invite a guest sorcerer. Relatives and fellow-villagers are also invited to come to the house. Before the date an altar is set up in the center of the main house, and on it are displayed the images of Duke No and Mother No (see Illus. 75). Behind the altar are pasted five colored portraits of the shen of the five sacred mountains. In front of the altar is a portal made of colored paper, called T'ao Yüan /"peach spring," i.e. Arcadia, from a Chinese legend/ cave. In front of the portal they also put up a hsi-kung. (1) The performance of the sorcerer,

1. See the layout for the first-grade sacrifice to the Kung-An shen.

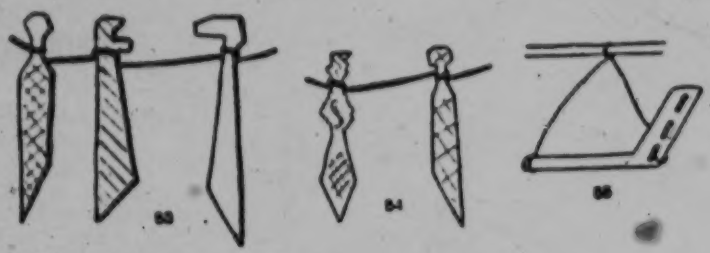
according to the investigation of the writers, consists of 30 parts, lasting from three to seven days. The following are brief accounts of each of these parts.

The first part is An Szu Ming "calming the god of the kitchen." It is performed at dawn. The sorcerer-priest wears a red kerchief around his head and holds a chiao-tzu. Standing in front of a winnowing basket set in front of the Peach Spring cave, he makes a low bow to the No shen with his hands in front, and utters an incantation to ask his patron saint to possess his *[787] body and to ask the ancestors of the host's family to come down. On finishing his incantation, he picks up a bowl of water with his left hand and makes his patron saint's esoteric gestures with his right hand, as if writing, facing the bowl of water. At the same time he also utters the incantation for cleansing the [783] sacrificial objects. First he speaks of the origin of water; next he flicks some drops of water on the offerings with his fingers. [776] The Miao think that the Szu Ming shen abstains from meat, wine, garlic, etc., and therefore the things have to be cleansed. *[787] After the cleansing, he divines with the chiao-tzu, and stops if

/212/

535 The Meau do not have any processions, purification procedures, or penances, but cultic dancing is known, as has already been described in detail. As will be recalled, the dance is purely sacral among the Meau, is performed only by men, and is always accompanied by the playing of mouth organs. The Meau women therefore do not dance at all, since they do not perform any cultic dances. In accordance with this attitude toward dancing, the Meau do not know any borrowing or loaning of dances.

778 411



Figs. 53-55. Spirit-swords of the Meau.

Figs. 53-55. Spirit-swords carved out of wood, with simple linear designs made with charcoal, 1/18 nat. size. Fig. 55. Spirit-sword made of bronze, 1/20 nat. size.

794 571 Unknown, too, are any religious societies or clubs, such as, say, a joining together of the young people at the time of initiation, since nothing like this is known, and, as has been said, no sacrifices are offered at the onset of puberty.

532 778 The concept of the totem is likewise unknown to the Meau; no idols are erected and there are no plastic representations of gods or ancestors. Although the everyday life of the Meau reveals an intimate association with their ancestors and spirits, they limit themselves to erecting places of worship for them, but not images.